

TWO SYMPATRIC SPECIES OF THE *MABUYA STRIATA* COMPLEX (SAURIA : SCINCIDAE) IN THE SOUTHERN KALAHARI

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Although *Mabuya striata* (Peters) is one of the commonest lizards in many parts of eastern Africa, the geographic variation throughout its entire range has never been analysed. Several workers have recently studied the variation in circumscribed areas and revived or described various races and closely related species. Mertens (1955) recognised three races of *Mabuya striata* in South West Africa — typical *striata*, *spilogaster* (Peters) and *sparsa* Mertens.

During 1959-60 Dr. C. K. Brain of the Transvaal Museum collected 187 specimens of "*Mabuya striata*" in the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park and along the road from Vanzylsrus to Askham, just south of the Botswana border. In two areas (see Fig. 1) he collected specimens of the "races" *spilogaster* and *sparsa* living together on the same trees (usually *Acacia giraffae*). These two forms can be readily distinguished on five characters and there are no intergrades, so it is evident that two sympatric species are involved.

In February 1967 I found these two forms sympatric at several localities on the Molopo and Nossob Rivers, but this recently collected material has not yet been studied.

A full revision of the *Mabuya striata* complex is a long term project, but it is desirable initially to establish the specific status of *M. spilogaster* by analysing the differences between two sympatric species in an area where they are readily distinguished.

I am grateful to Dr. C. K. Brain for making this most interesting species of skinks available and for contributing his field notes on this material as a separate paper to be published in this journal.

MATERIAL EXAMINED

UM. = Umtali Museum Catalogue Numbers; all other material deposited in the Transvaal Museum and listed with the collector's field numbers.

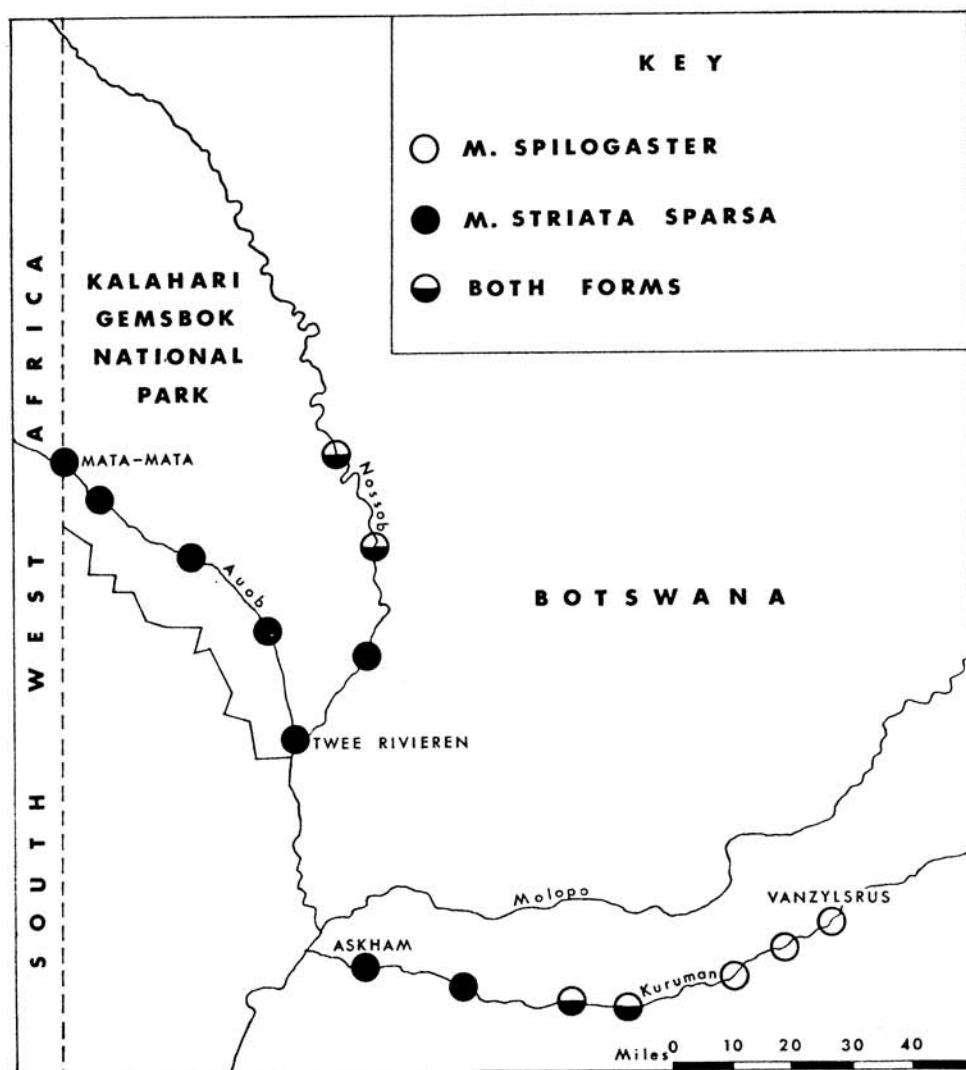
MABUYA SPILOGASTER (Peters)

Euprepes (Euprepis) striatus var. *spilogaster* Peters, 1882, Reise nach Mossambique, Zool. 3, Amphib., p. 68: Otjimbingue, South West Africa.

Mabuya striata spilogaster Mertens, 1955, p. 80, pl. 12, fig. 54 (Damaraland and Great Namaqualand).

B. 481 - 4	Vanzylsrus	13. ix. 60
B. 485	9 miles WSW of Vanzylsrus	13. ix. 60
B. 486 - 8, 492	20 miles WSW of Vanzylsrus	13. ix. 60
B. 496	40 miles WSW of Vanzylsrus	13. ix. 60
B. 499, 500, 504	50 miles WSW of Vanzylsrus	13. ix. 60
UM. 10419 (B. 571);	UM. 10428 - 32 (B 535 - 6, 539, 540, 542)	Nossob River
	40 miles above Twee Rivieren	20. ix. 60
U.M. 10443 - 7	Nossob River 60 miles above Twee Rivieren	20. ix. 60

Variation. Supraciliaries 5 (rarely 3 or 4); dorsal scales tricarinate; lamellae under fourth toe 20-25; see also Table 1.



Coloration. Dorsum dark with scattered large pale spots, each placed in the centre of a scale and often accentuated by dark spots on the lateral edges of the scale; a pair of broad pale dorso-lateral stripes present; flanks dark with scattered pale spots; ventrum white with irregular black blotches and streaks extending from chin to tail.

Size. Largest (B. 481 — Vanzylsrus) $77 + 86 = 163$ mm.

Habitat. Trees and fallen logs along the road from Vanzylsrus to Askham and trees bordering the dry bed of the Nossob River in the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park.

Distribution. Highlands of South West Africa, extending into southwestern Botswana and adjoining areas of the northern Cape Province.

MABUYA STRIATA SPARSA Mertens

Mabuya striata sparsa Mertens, 1954, *Senckenbergiana*, 34, p. 182: Warmbad, South West Africa; 1955, p. 80.

70 specimens	Twee Rivieren	February, 1959
B. 489-91, 493-5, 497-8	40 miles WSW of Vanzylsrus	13.ix.60
B. 501-3	50 miles WSW of Vanzylsrus	13.ix.60
B. 505-14	70 miles WSW of Vanzylsrus	13.ix.60
B. 515-22	90 miles WSW of Vanzylsrus	13.ix.60
UM. 9665-71 (B. 523-, 526-30);	Nossob River, 20 miles above	14.ix.60
B. 525, 531	Twee Rivieren	
UM. 10433-42 (B. 533-47);	Nossob River, 40 miles above	20.ix.60
UM 10420-2 (B. 570, 572-3)	Twee Rivieren	
UM. 10448-52	Nossob River, 60 miles above	20.ix.60
	Twee Rivieren	
B. 548-59	Auob River, 20 miles above	15.ix.60
	Twee Rivieren	
B. 560-9	Auob River, 40 miles above	15.ix.60
	Twee Rivieren	
TM — (7 specimens)	Auob River, 60 miles above	17.ix.60
	Twee Rivieren	
UM. 9659-63	Mata-Mata, Kalahari Gemsbok National Park	17.ix.60

Variation. Frontal occasionally longitudinally divided; supraciliaries 5 (rarely 4 or 6); dorsal scales tricarinate; lamellae under fourth toe 20-26; see also Table 1.

Coloration. Dark brown above with numerous small pale spots; no trace of light dorso-lateral stripes; ventrum white, chin and throat sometimes black.

Size. Largest (UM. 9659 — Mata-Mata) $87 + 130 = 217$ mm., but B. 561 measures 95 mm. from snout to vent (tail truncated).

Habitat. Seventy specimens were collected from four *Acacia giraffae* trees at Twee Rivieren, the confluence of the Auob and Nossob Rivers. The

other skinks were collected on trees and some on a stone wall in the bed of the Auob River.

Distribution. The valley of the Orange River and its tributaries below 3,000 feet.

TABLE 1. Comparison of *Mabuya spilogaster* and *Mabuya striata sparsa* in an area of sympatry.

		<i>spilogaster</i>	<i>sparsa</i>	
SERIES		24	163	
PREFRONTALS:	widely separated	18	4	
	narrowly separated	3	26	
	meet at a point	—	7	
	narrow contact	2	12	
	broad contact	—	113	
UPPER LABIAL	5 labials anterior to sub-ocular	41	3	
FORMULA	6 labials anterior to sub-ocular	7	10	
(Sides)	Sub-ocular not reaching lip	—	313	
MIDBODY SCALE ROWS	32	1	—	
	(not available for 70 eviscerated <i>M. s.</i>			
	<i>sparsa</i> from Twee Rivieren)	34	13	—
	35	3	—	
	36	6	1	
	37	—	—	
	38	1	16	
	39	—	7	
	40	—	53	
	41	—	6	
	42	—	10	
	Mean	34.6	39.9	
DORSAL MARKINGS		A pair of broad pale dorso-lateral stripes	No pale dorso-lateral stripes	
VENTRAL MARKINGS		Irregular black speckling on throat and belly	No speckling on throat and belly	
MAXIMUM SNOUT-VENT LENGTH		77 mm.	95 mm.	

REFERENCES

MERTENS, R. 1955. Die Amphibien und Reptilien Sudwesafrikas. *Abhand. senckenberg. naturf. Ges.* 490:1-172, map, pls. i-xxiv.